

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A document retrieval method, comprising:  
5 receiving a request email message from a requesting device via a network, the request email message embodying a document request;  
automatically generating a response email message with at least one document attached thereto in response to the document request; and  
automatically transmitting the response email message to a  
10 destination address on the network.
- 15 2. The document retrieval method of claim 1, further comprising parsing the request email message to identify the destination address.
- 20 3. The document retrieval method of claim 1, further comprising parsing the request email message to identify the at least one document requested in the document request.
- 25 4. The document retrieval method of claim 1, further comprising:  
determining if the requesting device is authorized to retrieve the at least one document; and  
automatically generating an access denial email message in response  
to the request email message when the requesting device is not authorized to  
retrieve the at least one document.
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5. The document retrieval method of claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving a directory request email message that embodies a request  
for a directory file listing from the requesting device;  
automatically generating the directory file listing in response to the  
5 request therefor;  
placing the directory file listing into a directory response email  
message; and  
automatically transmitting the directory response email message to  
the destination address.

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6. The document retrieval method of claim 1, further comprising:  
determining whether the request email message is properly formatted;  
and  
15 transmitting an error message to the requesting device when the  
request email message is not properly formatted.

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7. The document retrieval method of claim 5, further comprising:  
determining whether the directory request email message is properly  
20 formatted; and  
transmitting an error message to the requesting device when the  
directory request email message is not properly formatted.

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8. A program embodied in a computer readable medium, comprising:  
code that temporarily stores a request email message in a memory  
that was received from a requesting device via a network, the request email  
message embodying a document request;  
30 code that automatically generates a response email message with at  
least one document attached thereto in response to the document request; and  
code that automatically transmits the response email message to a  
destination address on the network.

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9. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 8, further comprising code that parses the request email message to identify the destination address.

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10. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 8, further comprising code that parses the request email message to identify the at least one document requested in the document request.

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11. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 8, further comprising:

code that determines if the requesting device is authorized to retrieve the at least one document; and

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code that automatically generates an access denial email message in response to the request email message when the requesting device is not authorized to retrieve the at least one document.

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12. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 8, further comprising:

code that temporarily stores a directory request email message in a memory that was received from the requesting device, the directory request email message embodying a request for a directory file listing;

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code that automatically generates the directory file listing in response to the request therefor;

code that places the directory file listing into a directory response email message; and

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code that automatically transmits the directory response email message to the destination address.

13. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 8, further comprising:

code that determines whether the request email message is properly formatted; and

5 code that transmits an error message to the requesting device when the request email message is not properly formatted.

14. The program embodied in a computer readable medium of claim 12, further comprising:

code that determines whether the directory request email message is properly formatted; and

code that transmits an error message to the requesting device when the directory request email message is not properly formatted.

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15. A document retrieval system, comprising:

a processor circuit having a processor and a memory;

a document retriever stored in the memory and executable by the

20 processor, the document retriever comprising:

logic that temporarily stores a request email message in a memory that was received from a requesting device via a network, the request email message embodying a document request;

25 logic that automatically generates a response email message with at least one document attached thereto in response to the document request; and

logic that automatically transmits the response email message to a destination address on the network.

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16. The document retrieval system of claim 15, wherein the document retriever further comprises logic that parses the request email message to identify the destination address.

17. The document retrieval system of claim 15, wherein the document retriever further comprises logic that parses the request email message to identify the at least one document requested in the document request.

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18. The document retrieval system of claim 15, wherein the document retriever further comprises:

logic that determines if the requesting device is authorized to retrieve the at least one document; and

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logic that automatically generates an access denial email message in response to the request email message when the requesting device is not authorized to retrieve the at least one document.

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19. The document retrieval system of claim 15, wherein the document retriever further comprises:

logic that temporarily stores a directory request email message in a memory that was received from the requesting device, the directory request email message embodying a request for a directory file listing;

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logic that automatically generates the directory file listing in response to the request therefor;

logic that places the directory file listing into a directory response email message; and

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logic that automatically transmits the directory response email message to the destination address.

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20. The document retrieval system of claim 15, wherein the document retriever further comprises:

logic that determines whether the request email message is properly formatted; and

logic that transmits an error message to the requesting device when the request email message is not properly formatted.

- 5           21.     The document retrieval system of claim 19, wherein the document retriever further comprises:

logic that determines whether the directory request email message is properly formatted; and

- 10           logic that transmits an error message to the requesting device when the directory request email message is not properly formatted.

22.     A document retrieval system, comprising:

- 15           means for temporarily storing a request email message that was received from a requesting device via a network, the request email message embodying a document request;

means for automatically generating a response email message with at least one document attached thereto in response to the document request; and

- 20           means for automatically transmitting the response email message to a destination address on the network.

23.     The document retrieval system of claim 22, further comprising means for parsing the request email message to identify the destination address.

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24.     The document retrieval system of claim 22, further comprising means for parsing the request email message to identify the at least one document requested in the document request.

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